

## FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I accepted the Food Stamp Challenge, living for the past week on the average food stamp benefit of \$1 per meal or \$21 for the entire week.

I did it in order to draw attention to the persistent problem of hunger in America. I didn't realize just how hard it would be, but on my first shopping trip to Safeway, I quickly found out. It was hard enough to buy basic staples, but once I got to the produce section, it was impossible to buy much of anything. There was no way to eat a nutritious diet. Fruits and vegetables were simply out of my price range.

For me, it was a learning experience. For 26 million Americans and 1.2 million Illinoisans, it is a way of life. I wonder how parents on food stamps can stretch their budgets so their children have enough to eat or how seniors with chronic illness afford both eating nutritious meals and purchasing adequate medication. The answer for many is they simply can't.

In the richest country in the world, the fact that families face these sort of trade-offs is unjust and I would say it's immoral. The United States is spending merely \$3 billion each week in Iraq, yet we expect hungry Americans to eat on \$3 a day?

We need to pass Representatives JIM MCGOVERN's and JO ANN EMERSON's Feeding America's Families Act which would strengthen America's anti-hunger safety net programs, including food stamps, at a reasonable and affordable cost of about \$4 billion per year. These are the kinds of provisions that ought to be part of the farm bill which includes the food stamp program.

I just ended this challenge yesterday. I am looking forward to a big salad for lunch where I include all kinds of vegetables at the salad bar that's in the cafeteria, adding whatever I want to that salad rather than having to carefully pick and choose what I had last week, which was one head of lettuce and one tomato and a few carrots, and that was about it. My snacks were water and, on a good moment, ice water.

It was an interesting and instructive week for me, but imagining my children and grandchildren having to live that way made it very, very clear to me that this really ought not to be a forced option for so many millions of Americans.

We can do better. This is a matter of priorities. We can change those priorities. We can make sure that with pride we say that no one in this country goes hungry, that everyone in this country at least has the opportunity to make healthy choices about the food that they eat and the food that they serve their children.

How can a child learn in school when they come without an adequate breakfast? How can they achieve in life without the nutrition that they need as their bones are growing and as their minds are growing? I am very hopeful that the experiment that I did with Congressmen MCGOVERN and EMERSON and TIM RYAN will prove to be helpful in making sure that we are able to pass more humane, and important to all Americans, legislation that will provide nutritious and affordable food for all of our residents in the United States.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLEAVER) at 10 a.m.

## PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, guardian of our freedom and provider for all, as we approach Memorial Day, let us not forget the true meaning of this Nation's moment of memory. We shall not be mindless of all our blessings as Your people. Rather, in the leisure of the holiday weekend, we shall demonstrate our indebtedness to our brothers and sisters who serve in the military. With reverence, we shall call to mind those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in serving this Nation and protecting human freedom around the world.

Thus Your Holy Scriptures, Lord, shall be fulfilled in us as this holiday unfolds and names to be memorialized are brought on to our attention. The Bible says, "Every living person appreciates generosity. Do not withhold your gratitude, even when someone is dead. Do not turn your back on those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn." Amen.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 254. An act to award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi.

## MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE TIED TO FUNDING IRAQ WAR

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the Associated Press reports that the latest Iraq supplemental funding plan incredibly will tie an increase in the minimum wage to funding the war through October. If this is true, and I hope it is not, it tells American workers that the only way they will get an increase in wages is to continue funding a war which is taking the lives of their sons and daughters. First, blood for oil; now a minimum wage for maximum blood? Aren't the American people giving enough blood for this war without having to give more to have a wage increase? What's happened to our country? We are losing our moral compass. We are losing our sense of justice. We are losing touch with the difference between right and wrong.

We do not have to fund this war. We must leave Iraq now. Support our troops. Bring them home. H.R. 1234 is a plan to end the war and stabilize Iraq and give Iraqis control of their oil. We must take a new path. We must take a path of truth and justice.

## TAX REDUCTIONS BENEFIT FAMILIES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's The Hill features an advertisement by Merrill Lynch that praised the 2003 tax cuts, proclaiming, "Lower capital gains and dividend tax rates have produced major economic gains."

I was present 4 years ago this week when President Bush signed the tax reduction legislation. The results are some of the most successful ever. The economy has expanded \$1.6 trillion; 7.8 million new jobs have been created; unemployment rates are near historic lows. The stock market is at a record high, soaring 40 percent. Tax revenues are the highest ever because of private sector growth. Twenty-four million